

In support of Ivan Buchta and Martin Pezlar: Street protest in Prague, on Nov. 26th, 2012

Czech citizens Ivan Buchta and Martin Pezlar have been detained in Greece since September 9, 2012 on charges of espionage. These charges are, as far as it is possible to tell, completely groundless.

It is hard to see our two colleagues, friends and fellow citizens of the Czech Republic being kept in prison, in appalling conditions, based on dubious allegations, and referred to as Turkish agents. The whole situation is all the more absurd considering that the Czech Republic and Greece are both member states of the EU and, inclusive of Turkey, allies within NATO.

Ivan and Martin are no spies, they are talented developers of the ArmA games series that spreads the good name of the Czech Republic all around the world. Their games sold millions of copies and won numerous awards. The ArmA III game may be a cause for their current predicament. It takes place on a smaller, geographically modified version of the island Limnos in 2035. Obviously, set so far in the future, no current military installations are part of the game.

Ivan and Martin allegedly knowingly and intentionally took pictures of military objects. They were taken into custody in their hotel and as far as we know the evidence against them consists of a handful of pictures with some military facilities in the background, inadvertently captured on quite commonplace vacation pictures. The pictures and videos of the very same military facilities can be easily found on the Internet, in much better quality.

It is not our task to judge the guilt in this affair. However, it is our considered opinion that Greece, being a partner and ally of the Czech Republic in EU and NATO, should treat our citizens with dignity and respect, and without delay. The evidence presented makes us think that the espionage charge is utterly absurd. The strike of the legal professionals in Greece unduly delays any decision.

The members of public gathered here on November 26th, 2012 wish to express their unanimous support for Ivan and Martin and call on His Excellency Mr. Georges Paizis, the Ambassador of the Hellenic Republic to the Czech Republic, to approach the representatives of the Greek Government about expediting the solution of this issue.

We are concerned that the whole affair can seriously damage the image of Greece as a free and democratic country not only in the Czech Republic, but also internationally.

Ivan and Martin are well known and the affair is closely followed by their fans and media both locally and internationally. The petitions in their support at petition.helpivanmartin.org and www.petice.biz were signed by more than **21 thousand people** from all over the world. The Facebook group for their release has **4,000 supporters**. Their fate is closely followed by all Czech TV stations and major dailies and also by the biggest international video game news servers.

Many of us know Ivan and Martin personally. We are one hundred percent sure that they are not spies or agents. They are consummate professionals and decent, law-obeying human beings. We join the ranks of their supporters.

Ivan, Martin – we stand behind you!

helpivanmartin.org

www.facebook.com/groups/helpivanmartin

Martin Bach

Daniel Vávra

Karel Drda

Petr Poláček

Lukáš Macura

Jan Modrák

Martin Klíma

Pavel Dobrovský